

Message Text

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16

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 IO-12

OMB-01 EUR-25 DPW-01 RSR-01 /121 W
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P R 170721 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 248

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 6491

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJ: MR II DAILY SITREP 16 APR 73

HEREWITH REPEAT AMCONSUL NHA TRANG MESSAGE 397 QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L NHA TRANG 0397

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: MR II DAILY SIT REP, APRIL 16

1. SUMMARY: EXCEPT FOR NORTHERN BINH DINH, REGION WAS GENERALLY QUIET OVER WEEKEND. CANDEL SENIOR MILITARY ADVISOR BELIEVES QUANG TRI HELICOPTER DOWNING WILL NOT BE MAJOR FACTOR IN CANADIAN DECISION WHETHER TO STAY OR GO. POLISH INTERPRETER TALKS ABOUT LIFE AT DUC CO.

2. MILITARY SITUATION: MILITARY ACTIVITY IN PAST 72 HOURS CONTINUED AT APPROXIMATELY SAME LEVEL OF INCIDENCE AND IN SAME AREAS OF CONCENTRATION AS DURING PRECEDING WEEK TO TEN DAYS. THIRTY- FOUR ENEMY- INITIATED INCIDENTS WERE REPORTED FOR ENTIRE PERIOD, WITH 26 IN NORTHERN DISTRICTS OF BINH DINH AND REMAINDER SCATTERED THROUGH PLEIKU, PHU YEN, NINH THUAN AND BINH THUAN. AGGREGATE CASUALTIES: RVNAF, 29 KIA, 16 WIA; ENEMY, 18 KIA, ONE CAPTURED. ALL INCIDENTS WERE ATTACKS BY FIRE OR MININGS EXCEPT FOR TWO MOST SERIOUS.

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3. FIRST OF THESE OCCURRED AT 0415 HOURS ON APRIL 13, TECHNICALLY

BEFORE BEGINNING OF 72- HOUR REPORTING PERIOD, BUT WAS NOT BRIEFED IN NHA TRANG UNTIL MORNING OF APRIL 14. IT WAS ENEMY GROUND ASSAULT, SUPPORTED BY MORTAR FIRE, ON RANGER COMPANY OUTPOST IN TAM QUAN DISTRICT, BINH DINH. ENEMY PENETRATED RANGER PERIMETER, KILLED 14 AND WOUNDED ONE, CAPTURED ONE M-60 AND EIGHT M-16' S AND ONE RADIO. ENEMY LOSSES UNKNOWN. SECOND MAJOR INCIDENT WAS ENEMY SHOOT- DOWN OF VNAF HELICOPTER ON RESUPPLY MISSION OVER HOAI NHON DISTRICT, BINH DINH, AT 1245 HOURS APRIL 14. VNAF CREW OF FOUR AND THREE ARVN PASSENGERS WERE KILLED AND CHOPPER TOTALLY DESTROYED.

4. KONTUM POLOFF REPORTS THAT ACTIVITY PICKED UP IN AREA WSW OF KONTUM CITY (DISCUSSED IN SEVERAL RECENT SIT REPS) ON APRIL 13, WHEN ENEMY MORTARED RF POSITIONS (NO CASUALTIES) AND RF RESPONDED WITH 300 ROUNDS OF ARTILLERY. THIS ACTION NOT REFLECTED IN MR 2 NHA TRANG AFTER- ACTION REPORTS, WHICH IN LAST THREE DAYS HAVE STATED ONLY THAT ELEVEN MEMBERS OF RF COMPANY ATTACKED IN SAME AREA APRIL 10 HAVE NOW RETURNED WITH THEIR WEAPONS, LEAVING 50 STILL MIA. GIVEN TIME THAT HAS NOW ELAPSED, WE WOULD JUDGE THAT REMAINDER PROBABLY KILLED OR CAPTURED.

5. BAN ME THUOT POLOFF REPORTS THAT TEN PERSONS WERE FOUND SHOT AND KILLED ON APRIL 12 APPROX 15 KMS SOUTHEAST OF CITY IN BMT DISTRICT. THEY WERE DISTRICT S-2 AND HIS INTELLIGENCE SERGEANT (BOTH IN MUFTI) AND EIGHT CIVILIAN LOGGERS. THEY COULD HAVE BEEN ON INTELLIGENCE- GATHERING MISSION, BUT LOCAL RUMOR HOLDS THAT THEIR PURPOSE WAS MORE AVARICIOUS. IT IS NOT KNOWN AT THIS TIME WHETHER PERPETRATORS WERE ENEMY TROOPS OR IRATE MONTAGNARDS RESENTFUL OF VIETNAMESE LOGGING OPERATIONS ON THEIR LAND. CHIEF OF GVN ELEMENT OF LOCAL TOWN VOLUNTEERED VIEW THAT FULRO CADRE WERE RESPONSIBLE. POLOFF NOTES THAT AREA IS DOTTED WITH BUONS WHOSE INDEPENDENT-MINDED INHABITANTS STRONGLY SUPPORT FULRO AND HAS SEEN NUMEROUS CLASHES OVER LAND ENCROACHMENT.

6. ICCS: CANADIAN SENIOR MILITARY ADVISOR, MAJ. GEN. MCALPINE, SPENT WEEKEND VISITING CANDELS AT ICCS SITES IN TRUCE REGION 3. HE TOLD NHA TRANG POLOFF HE BELIEVES APRIL 7 HELICOPTER INCIDENT HAS RUN ITS COURSE AFTER WIDESPREAD PRESS COVERAGE AND INITIAL REACTIONS OF SHOCK AND ANGER. WHATEVER ICCS REPORTS EMERGE FROM INVESTIGATION WILL BE ANTI- CLIMACTIC. MCALPINE SAID INCIDENT RAISES QUESTIONS NOT ONLY OF OVER- ALL PRG INTENTIONS AND OF ITS CONFIDENTIAL

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GOOD WILL TOWARD PEACE- KEEPING MACHINERY BUT ALSO OR PRG' S ABILITY TO CONTROL UNITS ALLEGEDLY UNDER ITS COMMAND. WITH RESPECT TO CANADA' S CONTINUING IN ICCS, INCIDENT WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BUT WILL NOT BE A MAJOR FACTOR, IN MCALPINE' S VIEW. HE FURTHER EXPRESSED CONVICTION THAT ONLY INTERESTED PARTY WITH POTENTIAL FOR INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS OF PEACE- KEEPING MACHINERY IS US. CANADA CAN ASSUME HARD- DRIVING POSTURE WITHIN ICCS, BUT US PRESSURES ON WARSAW AND BUDAPEST ARE OF MUCH GREATER CONSEQUENCE.

7. ICCS TEAM IN CHEO REO IS ABOUT TO FORWARD ITS FIRST REPORT TO REGION 3 HQS. TEAM SPLIT IN PREDICTABLE TWO- TWO FASHION. POLDEL AND HUNGDEL TOOK FULL ADVANTAGE OF INCOMPETENT GVN PREPARATION. COORDINATES GIVEN IN GVN COMPLAINT LED ICCS TEAM TO DISTRICT HQS INSTEAD OF ACTUAL SITES OF INCIDENT 400 METERS DISTRANT. POLDELS AND HUNGDELS CONCLUDED THAT INCIDENT COULD NOT HAVE TAKEN PLACE SINCE DISTRICT HQS WAS UNDAMAGED. (AS REPORTED SAIGON 6284, APRIL 13 SIT REP, AND NHA TRANG 396, GVN IS NOW EXERCISING MORE CARE IN THE PREPARATION OF COMPLAINTS FOR ICCS CONSIDERATION.) RANKING CHEO REO HUNGDEL IS REPORTEDLY UNHAPPY WITH INSTRUCTIONS NOT TO CONCUR IN ANY DECISION CONDEMNATORY OF PRG/ DRV REGARDLESS OF THE FACTS. HE BELIEVES ICCS CAN PLAY CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IF ALLOWED TO FUNCTION OBJECTIVELY.

8. TUY AN TEAM HAS FORWARDED TO PLEIKU ITS REPORT ON INVESTIGATION OF VC AMBUSH OF NHA TRANG TUY HOA TRAIN AT DEO CA PASS IN PHU YEN ON MARCH 20. WE HAVE NO INFO AS YET ON CONCLUSIONS CONTAINED IN REPORT.

9. DARLAC PROVINCE CHIEF PLANS TO INITIATE NEW ROUND OF DISTRICT ORIENTATION TOURS FOR ICCS TEAM AT BAN ME THUOT. TEAM MEMBERS, EXCEPT FOR HUNGDELS, ARE ALL RECENT ARRIVALS IN PROVINCE. BUON HO DISTRICT, SCENE OF FIGHTING THROUGHOUT FEBRUARY, REMAINS CONSPICUOUS BY ITS ABSENCE FROM ICCS ITINERARIES.

10. A POLISH INTERPRETER TRANSITING NHA TRANG AFTER COMPLETION OF ONE- MONTH STINT AT DUC CO RELATED THAT HE AND SIX OTHERS ON DUC CO ICCS TEAM CAME DOWN WITH HIGH FEVERS SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE. HE ATTRIBUTED ILLNESS TO FLIES HOVERING AROUND A MASS OF UNBURIED BODIES NOT FAR FROM THE ICCS BAMBOO HUT. ACCORDING TO INTERPRETER, PRG OFFICIALS CONTINUE TO PLACE SEVERE RESTRICTIONS ON ICCS MOVEMENT. TEAM MEMBERS ASKED TO SEE A VILLAGE WHICH THEY KNEW TO BE SOME TWO KILOMETERS FROM THE COMPOUND. THE PRG RESPONDED THAT NO SUCH

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VILLAGE EXISTED. PRG ALSO WARNED TEAM MEMBERS NOT TO USE TOILET FACILITIES AFTER NIGHTFALL BECAUSE OF PRESENCE OF POISONOUS SNAKES. AUDIBLE TO TEAM MEMBERS AT ALL TIMES WAS INTRODUCTION OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT INTO THE AREA. WHEN TEAM MEMBERS MADE INQUIRIES OF PRG OFFICIALS, THEY WERE TOLD THAT WHAT THEY HEARD WAS NOT MILITARY EQUIPMENT, BUT BULLDOZERS. " THERE IS AN INVASION OF BULLDOZERS IN DUC CO," THE INTERPRETER REMARKED. AT ONE POINT, WHEN A GVN AIRSTRIKE WAS UNDER WAY NEAR DUC CO, THE PRG COMMANDER CAME RUNNING INTO THE ICCS COMPOUND TO COMPLAIN OF THE GVN'S VIOLATION OF THE CEASE- FIRE AGREEMENT. " I DON' T SEE ANY VIOLATION," ONE CANDEL RESPONDED; " ALL I HEAR ARE BULLDOZERS*"

ENGLE UNQUOTE

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